

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 291025Z SEP 76  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9573

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 7226

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: AF, US, EAID

SUBJ: AFGHAN REQUEST FOR A HOSPITAL

REF KABUL 7112

1. ON SEPT 28 AND 29 I HAD USEFUL TALKS ON THE AFGHAN REQUEST FOR AN AID-FINANCED HOSPITAL WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL GHAUS AND MINISTER OF PLANNING KHURRAM. WITH BOTH OF THEM I EMPHASIZED THAT THE USG AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL UNDERSTANDS AND APPRECIATES THE AFGHAN DESIRE FOR A MORE ACTIVE US PARTICIPATION IN THE AFGHAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. I ALSO SAID THAT THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION BUT THAT AFGHANISTAN COULD USE MORE AND BETTER HOSPITAL FACILITIES. BUT, I ADDED, I HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT THE US COULD MAKE A POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL SUCCESS OUT OF A HOSPITAL PROJECT IN KABUL. MY DOUBTS ARE BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF FOREIGN DONORS IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD IN AFGHANISTAN IN THE PAST FEW YEARS WHICH LEADS ME TO CONCLUDE THAT A HOSPITAL PROJECT WOULD TAKE AT LEAST FIFTEEN YEARS OF AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT TO SUCCEED. I FURTHER SAID THAT THERE IS NO WAY ANY AMERICAN OFFICIAL AT THE PRESENT TIME COULD ASSURE SUCH A LONG-TERM AMERICAN COMMITMENT. FURTHER, IF THE HOSPITAL PROJECT WERE NOT TO SUCCEED, IT WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON OUR MUTUAL POLITICAL INTERESTS. FOLLOWING THIS PRESENTATION TO KHURRAM, I MADE ONE OTHER OBVIOUS POINT, THAT IS THAT WE WOULD OF COURSE TRANSMIT TO WASHINGTON ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS

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ON THIS PROJECT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN MIGHT

WISH TO GIVE US.

2. BOTH GHAS AND KHURRAM HOISTED IN MY POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS. KHURRAM CONCLUDED OUR CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD ASK THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO PREPARE ADDITIONAL PLANS AND INFORMATION TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PROBLEMS IN THE HOSPITAL PROJECT WHICH I DESCRIBED. HE SAID THAT FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THIS ADDITIONAL INFO BY THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, A JUDGMENT COULD BE MADE AT THAT TIME WHETHER TO PURSUE THIS PROJECT FURTHER. MY GUESS IS THAT THIS PROCESS WILL TAKE SOME TIME.

3. I ALSO SUGGESTED TO GHAS AND KHURRAM THAT THEY SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER IT WOULD NOT BE BEST IN THE SHORT TERM TO UPGRADE AN EXISTING HOSPITAL, FOR EXAMPLE MAKING BETTER USE OF THE CARE/MEDICO TEAM IN ONE OF KABUL'S NEWEST HOSPITALS, WHILE EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY OF A NEW HOSPITAL IN THE FUTURE. BOTH GHAS AND KHURRAM SEEMED TO THINK THAT THIS IDEA HAS SOME MERIT.

4. IN SHORT, I THINK THAT WE HAVE FOR THE TIME BEING PUT THIS IY FE ASIDE AND THEREFORE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO CONCENTRATE BOTH THE AFGHAN AND OUR OWN EFFORTS ON THE EXISTING AND CONTEMPLATED PROJECTS WHICH GIVE US BOTH PLENTY TO DO.  
ELIOT

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